

REMARKS

Claims 9-20 remain pending after amendment.

Claim Amendments

By this amendment, claims 1-8 are cancelled. New claims 9-20 are added. No new matter is added by this amendment.

Rejection under 35 USC 102(b)

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being unpatentable over Le et al U.S. Patent No. 4,895,806.

In response, claims 1-4 are cancelled. The rejection is thus moot and should be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 5-8 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Le et al U.S. Patent No. 4,895,806 in view of Quinn et al U.S. Patent No. 6,149,816 in view of Cazer et al U.S. Patent No. 5,071,547. This rejection respectfully is traversed to the extent deemed to apply to the claims as amended.

By way of review, the claimed invention is directed to both a chromatograph and a process of using same characterized by the use of an adsorbing membrane as a trapping column. A target component in trace amounts can be analyzed in the present invention. A dead volume can be decreased by practice of the present invention, whereby a thin membrane may be used to reduce the dead volume.

With respect to the cited prior art, Le et al discloses a column for separation of an immobilized enzyme reaction, as opposed to component concentration. It is further noted that Le et al fails to teach transfer in a reverse direction. Le et al teaches at column 4, lines 39-47 the possibility of additional membrane disks. Nothing is suggested regarding any decrease in dead volume and a decrease in the number of membrane disks.

Quinn et al merely teaches the general concept of the use of high speed liquid chromatograph including a separation column. No suggestion is provided regarding a component concentrating column. The reference is silent regarding a target concentrating column comprising a membrane for adsorbing the target component and a membrane for diffusing a target component, provided on one side or both sides of the membrane for adsorbing the target component.

Cazer et al is directed to a trapping column for use with backslash. The reference is silent with respect to the use of an adsorbing membrane as a trapping column to reduce dead volume.

In view of the above, the cited references, taken either singly or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the claimed invention.

The rejection is accordingly without basis and should be withdrawn.

The application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is earnestly solicited.

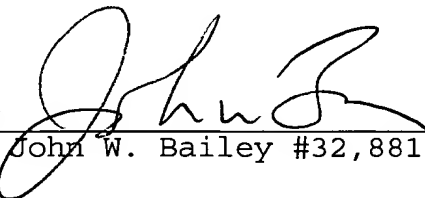
A check in the amount of \$1020.00 is attached for a three

month extension of time.


If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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